(a) whether it is a fact that Government are planning to privatise the Shipping Corporation of India and the Department of Disinvestment is looking after the various options of privatising India's largest shipping company;

(b) whether Government are planning a blueprint to bring down Government's holding in SCI to below 50 percent; and

(c) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) to (c) The Disinvestment Commission, in its 4th report, had given recommendations for disinvestment of shares in SCI. The Commission had, *inter-alia*, recommended disinvestment of 40% of SCI's shares to the Oil Sector companies, over and above the 20% shares already disinvested. As the Oil Sector Companies have indicated that they may not be keen on buying SCI equity, the Government has initiated action to consider various other options.

Four laning of Bangalore-Devanahalli National Highway

1332. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Karnataka has submitted a proposal for four laning of the National Highway on Bangalore-Devanahalli section to an extent of 30 Kms. for alignment approval and sanction for land acquisition; and

(b) if so, the details of the proposal and Government's view in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) and (b) 4-lanning of Bangalore-Devanahalli section on NH-7 is proposed to be done along the existing road alignment except for Yelahanka bypass, for which the alignment is already approved and land acquisition estimate is sanctioned.

Golden Quadrilateral Road Project

1333. SHRI PREM CHAND GUPTA:
SHRI RAMACHANDRAIAH RUMANDLA:

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government plans to set up a four lane, 5871 km long golden quadrilateral road network connecting the four Metros;

(b) if so, whether the work is to be completed by 2003 as against the original plan of 2005; and

(c) if so, the progress made on this so far?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir, in a length of 5952 Km.

(b) Yes, Sir. Most of the work on Golden Quadrilateral (GQ) is proposed to be completed by the year 2003.

(c) Four-laning on 504 Kms. length of National Highways on the GQ has been completed and work on 732 is in progress.

Sethu Samudaram Project

1334. SHRI P. SOUNDARARAJAN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether feasibility study and environment impact assessment study of Sethu Samudaram project have been conducted by the Public Investment Board;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if the answer to part (a) is in negative, the reasons for delay; and

(d) whether any fund has been allocated for the techno-economic feasibility study of the project as promised by the Finance Minister in the Budget for 1999-2000.

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) to (d) Committee of Public Investment Board has approved the proposal for first stage clearance for preparation of Detailed Feasibility Study and Environment Impact Assessment Study for the project. Regarding allocation of funds for conducting the above studies, Planning Commission have advised that the funds may be met from the overall Budget of the Ministry of Surface Transport. The above studies will take a period of about two years. Thus, the proposal is at a preliminary stage and the final decision for implementation of the project will be taken only after conducting the above studies.